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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 9 April 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues its systematic destruction of the two-State solution with its continuing illegal settlement campaign, deliberately waged in an attempt to seize more Palestinian land and entrench its control over the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that it has belligerently occupied since 1967. This illegal colonization campaign has recently included the confiscation of more Palestinian land, the demolition of Palestinian homes and civilian infrastructure, and provocative declarations for the establishment of a new settlement and the expansion of existing settlements.

Last week, on 4 April, the Israeli Government opened the bidding for the construction of 1,121 new settlement units on occupied land. The announcement regards the plans for another 827 units in the illegal settlement of "Har Homa", the construction of which was sanctioned by the current Israeli Prime Minister himself during his previous term in 1997, in Jabal Abu Ghneim in the southern part of Occupied East Jerusalem; and 180 units in the illegal settlement of "Givat Zeev" north of Occupied East Jerusalem. This provocative announcement, which signals the beginning of the implementation of these illegal and destructive plans, not only inflames tensions, but further underscores the dubious nature of the occupying Power's claims of readiness to negotiate a peace settlement according to the two-State solution, the achievement and the viability of which it continues to obstruct and denigrate daily.

This offensive, aggressive step by the occupying Power was preceded by yet another provocative declaration by the so-called Mayor of Jerusalem, who, on 2 April, announced plans to establish a new Israeli settlement in Occupied East Jerusalem. If these plans were implemented, they would involve the illegal construction of at least 200 settlement units in an area of Palestinian land between Abu Dis and Jabal Mukabber, effectively dividing Occupied East Jerusalem and further destroying the viability of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, wherein East Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine.

In addition, on 3 April, the Israeli occupying forces raided the Al-Makhrour area of the city of Beit Jala, west of Bethlehem, and carried out the bulldozer

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demolition of two Palestinian homes and a water well, a road and 53 utility poles, cutting off the electricity to at least 12 Palestinian families in the area. These illegal actions are clearly intended to displace Palestinian families from one of the last green areas left in the Bethlehem district, aiming to facilitate the expansion of the illegal settlement of "Har Gilo" and to further entrench Israel's network of settlements from Occupied East Jerusalem towards Al-Khalil in the southern West Bank and further restrict the area for the future natural development of Palestinian cities, towns and villages. Beit Jala has been repeatedly impacted by such heavy-handed, illegal policies of the occupying Power, with the recent illegal actions having been preceded by vast land confiscations and the construction of the illegal annexation Wall, which have gravely harmed the Cremisan area of the city, including a green area belonging to 58 families from Beit Jala, a kindergarten, a convent and a vineyard.

Moreover, in this connection, it is significant to note that the Palestinian city of Beit Jala is a predominantly Christian community that has been severely harmed by Israel's illegal occupation policies, especially its unlawful settlement activities, ranging from the construction of settlements, the Wall and the bypass roads, the expropriation of land, the stringent, racist and arbitrary permit regime and movement restrictions that have displaced thousands of families, as well as numerous other manifestations of this colonization campaign. The grave impact on the Palestinian Christian community as a whole in the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be emphasized in particular at this time of the Easter celebrations, when, once again, Palestinians' right to worship in their holy places and to take part in Easter ceremonies in Bethlehem and Occupied East Jerusalem was restricted and violated by Israel, the occupying Power.

The Palestinian leadership thus renews its appeals to the international community, and foremost the Security Council, to condemn Israel's illegal settlement activities and all other related unlawful policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Moreover, urgent measures must be undertaken to pressure the occupying Power and compel it to cease all such actions immediately. Israel's continued denial, rejection, obstruction and violation of Palestinian national and human rights is gravely impairing the fabric and the viability of the Palestinian society and gravely threatening the vision of two States on this land, where the Palestinian and Israeli peoples can coexist in peace and security, and thus threatening the region and international community as a whole. Preventing a steeper deterioration of the situation, averting continued escalation of tensions, and salvaging the slim prospects remaining for realizing the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders require that Israel, the occupying Power, be held accountable for all of its breaches of international law. It is high time to end the selectivity and the reliance on shameful political pretexts that have fuelled Israel's impunity at the expense of the peace, stability, justice and human rights for which the Palestinian people have long suffered and the international community has long called.

Before concluding, I must also draw your attention to the continued aggressions being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, and its extremist settlers against the Palestinian people. Recently, numerous Israeli military raids of Palestinian towns and villages were carried out, with a Palestinian man having been killed and several others injured and with dozens of Palestinian civilians having been arrested and homes ransacked by the occupying forces. In this regard, on

2 April, Rashad Theib Shoukha, age 28, died of wounds sustained on 27 March after having been shot by Israeli gunfire to the chest during a dawn raid by the Israeli occupying forces in the village of Rammoun near Ramallah. His brothers, Anwar and Akram, were also wounded, and the soldiers even prevented access by Palestinian medics to aid the three wounded men, who bled for hours.

In addition, in the past weeks arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians by the occupying Power continued. At least 20 Palestinians from Kufr Qaddoum, east of the city of Qalqiliya, were arrested by the Israeli occupying forces on 5 April, at least 15 other Palestinians were detained during overnight raids in the central and southern areas of the West Bank on 4 April, and 10 Palestinians were arrested, including two children, on 2 April. At the same time, the critical situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and detention centres continues to be a major concern for the Palestinian people and their leadership. The occupying Power continues its degrading and inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners, endangering their well-being and violating their human rights, and continues the administrative detention of hundreds of Palestinians without charge or trial. In this regard, while Hana Shalabi, who was once again detained by the occupying forces without charge and had been on a prolonged hunger strike, was recently released from detention, 12 other Palestinians remain on hunger strike in protest of their arbitrary detention by Israel.

It is also necessary to draw your attention to the injury of at least 61 Palestinian prisoners being held by Israel at the "Nafha" prison. The injuries occurred when Israeli soldiers stormed the jail, on 1 April, after Palestinian prisoners refused to give DNA samples, which the prison authorities even tried to get by force. This incident reflects just another deplorable and humiliating practice used by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilians, including children, women and elected officials, who it is unlawfully imprisoning, underscoring yet again the urgent need for the international community to redress the situation of Palestinian prisoners in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 422 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 12 March 2012 (A/ES-10/550-S/2012/188), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations